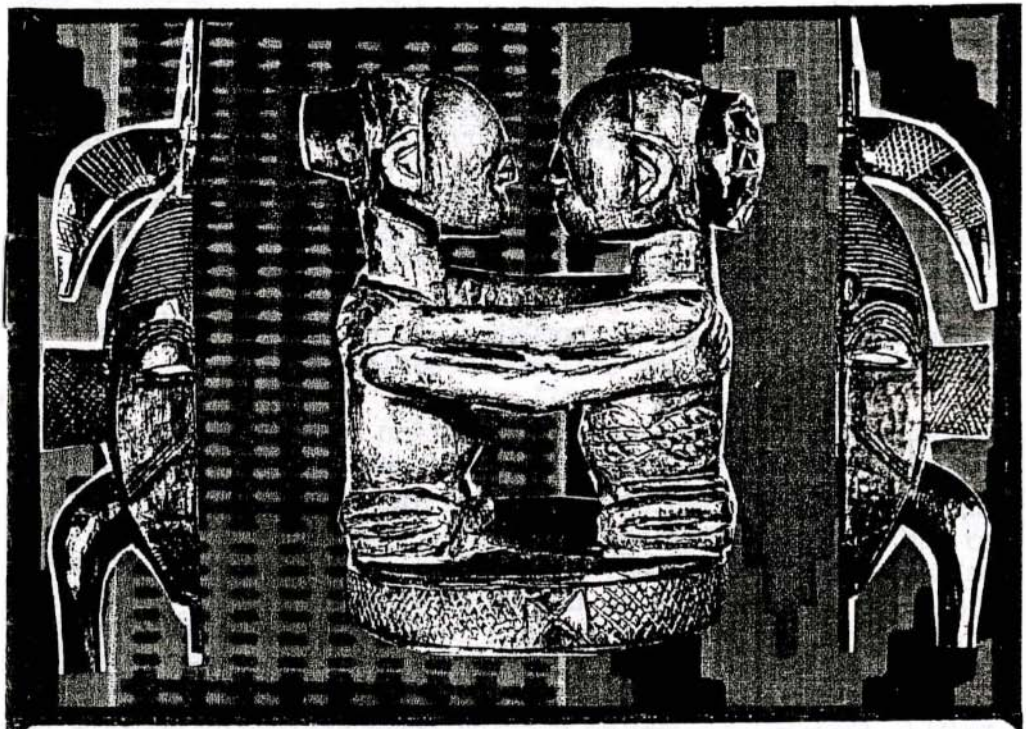
ARAMBE HFLAMEE

VOLUME XXV No. 12 December 2004



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EDITORIAL POLICY

The HARAMBEE FLAME is the monthly newsletter of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization(Nebraska State Pen chapter). Ours is a pan-Africanist publication, meaning that we view all people of African descent as one African people, having certain basic interests in common. Also, the HARAMBEE FLAME attempts to be Africentric, in that, through study of the history, cultures, and traditional values of African people, we seek to have and cultivate an African way of looking at things.

The main purposes of the HARAMBEE FLAME are to stimulate and inform. We list "stimulate" first because, more than anything else, we want our readers to be moved to question their/your own ideas, lives, and the circumstances in which we live and to challenge those things that must be challenged in order for us to move from a condition of mental and spiritual servitude and physical dependence upon Caucasian institutions to a state of collective self-determination. Toward this purpose, we present commentaries, poems, etc. These do not necessarily represent the official positions of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization.

The HARAMBEE FLAME provides information because wise people want to know what's going on and because certain kinds of information can stimulate the mind, inspire people to want to act, and influence them to pursue proper understanding so that the actions they take will be as effective as possible. The main vehicle we use to provide information is our "From Other Sources" feature in which we make an effort to provide news about the problems we African people are confronted by and the steps we are taking to resolve them. In this feature, we try to provide coverage of the activities of African people and developments affecting us in the U.S., the nations of Africa, and elsewhere. In "Commentary," we offer analysis of and views about current events and developments.

We encourage you to send your comments, essays, poems, etc. to HARAMBEE FLAME; Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization; P.O. Box 2500; Lincoln, NE.; 68542-2500.

GUEST COMMENTARY

African Woman Says "No" to Presidential Candidates

[Editor's note: A couple of days after the presidential election earlier this month, we were in contact with Phyllis Burns, a doctoral candidate at Michigan State University, whose special areas of study include: "Black Women's Lit." and "Black Radical Theory." In commenting on the election, she stated that she hadn't voted and also shared briefly her rationale. In view of P. Diddy's "Vote-or-Die" campaign and other pushes to get African people registered and to the polls for this past election, we asked the sister if she would be willing to express herself on paper as to why she didn't vote. Below are her remarks. We thank her for sharing her thoughts with us and remind you that you are welcome to submit expressions of your ideas.]

The idea of my not voting is not simply a matter of my disfavoring both Kerry and Bush, but rather, on a broader scale, the problem is the very idea of the presidency--the seat of power--and what institutions have been entrenched in order to validate the very position of president. We can talk all day 'n' night, for weeks, even months, etc. about the corruption emanating from the white house through various administrations; but such a discussion only scratches the surface, at best, since what needs to be addressed is not the idea of "bad" or "good" policy of individual administrations. We need to talk about the history of the u.s. as a regime and its continuum within all the presidential administrations.

Do I really need to explain why I didn't vote? Do I have to justify my decision? The reasons are so obvious to me. But see, the problem is that voting is considered decidedly "right," while choosing not to vote is what? But again, we run into this dilemma that plagues the country --you're either liberal or conservative--and even within this context, there is no discussion of how liberals and conservatives are merely reflections of each other and there is no significant ground outside these parameters, or outside this confining box. We have to stop letting others construct and maintain these boundaries--especially

when we know that these very boundaries are deliberately used as a measure to lock us out so that we remain powerless and our voices are readily dismissed.

But even if we step outside of the philosophical realm of not voting, we have to attend to the very physical aspect of voting in and of itself--the very nit grit idea of gettin yo behind to the ballot box. In the 2000 election I was unable to vote. I'm not gonna quibble and say I was unable to vote in Florida only--because I know that that was just a testing ground and it was successful for Bush cuz he did it again this year in Ohio and New Mexico. He won and he was victorious because he stopped Black folk, Latino folk from voting. Plain and simple. Why should I vote when I can't even get to the voting booth and, if I do, my ballot is thrown out? Now of course I might not even make it to the polling site since I have to maneuver my way around trigger-happy cops who have erected road blocks. And what have my choices always been? A candidate on one hand who, in order to ensure his political viability, is quite comfortable with my being disenfranchised or the other who orchestrates my disfranchisement? That's tantamount to saying to me: which poison is your preference?

As an African in the u.s., I/we attempt to carve out strategies of survival and liberation. I live in a country which has a long history of misrepresenting my presence --No, wait a minute. I am acknowledged, yet only as I am continually propped up and exploited to further the agenda that feeds and replenishes white america's delusion of superiority. I live in a country that maintains the thought that I, and of course, by extenstion, all Black folk are the source and cause of virtually every societal ill.

When I stand up and be confrontational, look at how, historically, they come at me from all angles. For instance, I'm lynched, shot at as I lay asleep in bed. I'm gunned down on a busy interstate highway. I'm thrown into the bowels of prison. Hell, they'll even snatch away my position as poet laureate. But see, I'm repeatedly told to "get over it," or my favorite, "You're reading far too much into the situation."

Vote?! Why? And I'm getting sick and tired of people pullin Bill Clinton outta they ass, talkin about he's the "First Black President" and the Constitution should be amended to accommodate his third run for presidency. Hell, more of us were put in prison under his administration than the Bush Sr. and Reagan administrations combined. And no one wants to talk about how Clinton can easily and comfortably slip into a reactionary rhetoric when he tells Blacks to take responsibility for their economic predicament. Clinton is embraced and all his devastating policies, such as the "Three Strike Rule" are supposed to be overlooked because, remember, during his campaign, he played the saxophone on Arsenio Hall's show and, after his presidency, he opened an office in Harlem. PLEEEZE! We need to demand more.

Clinton. William Jefferson Clinton--named after Thomas Jefferson, the consummate slave master/rapist/pedophile. And since we're on the subject of linkin' presidents to prison, Black folk and chattel slavery, wasn't it Jimmy Carter who had a Black woman taken out of a Georgia prison so the Sista could take care of his daughter, Amy? I'm not talking about Carter overturning her conviction. What I'm sayin is that the Sista's prison job was to serve as Mammy for the Carter child. Hell, that's slavery! And George Bush, Sr. and Jr.? Where to begin with them?--probably the same place where we can begin to talk about Reagan--and have you noticed how Democrats are talkin about what a great president Reagan was, just the same as the Republicans? So, see, what are MY choices?

-Phyllis Burns

KWANZAA

Kwanzaa was introduced in 1966 by Maulana Karenga as a holiday observance for African people in the U.S. This observance, which runs from December 26th to January 1st., celebrates the richness and antiquity of traditional African cultures and values, as well as Africa's history and is based on the traditional African practice of holding celebrations at the bringing in of the first fruits/crops of the harvest.

Each day of Kwanzaa represents one of the nguzo saba(seven principles) of Kwanzaa: Dec. 26 - Umoja(Unity), Dec. 27 -Kujichagulia(Self-determination), Dec. 28 - Ujima(Collective Work and Responsibility), Dec. 29 - Ujamaa(Cooperative Economics), Dec. 30 - Nia(Purpose), Dec. 31 - Kuumba(Creativity, Jan. 1 - Imani(Faith).

In addition to having its seven principles, Kwanzaa makes use of seven symbols: mazao(crops), which represent the historical roots of Kwanzaa and the rewards of productive labor; mkeka(straw mat), which represents African history and traditions; kinara(candle-holder), which represents our parent people, Africans on the African continent; mishumaa saba(seven candles), which represent the seven principles; vibunzi(ears of corn), which represent the children of our households; zawadi(gifts), which represent commitments made and kept by our children and the fruits of the parents' labor; and kikombe cha umoja(unity cup), which represents unity and is used to pour libation in honor of our ancestors. There are two supplementary symbols: the nguzo saba(seven principles, in written form or recited) and the bendera ya taifa(red, black, and green flag or other flag representing the oneness of African people.

While the Christmas holiday is full of European-derived customs, traditions, and symbols, Kwanzaa is rooted in our own African historical experience. Christmas has been, for quite some time in this country, as much of a money-making enterprise as anything. We should treat Kwanzaa as a sacred observance of our African peoplehood, of our history, cultures, and values. In so doing, we should not participate in any desecration of Kwanzaa--by injecting materialism into it or mixing European-derived symbols and/or customs in with the ceremonies and other aspects of this celebration of our Africanness. To the extent that we make purchases in connection with Kwanzaa --such as food, Africentric educational materials, Kwanzaa cards, etc.--we should make these purchases from African vendors and by products made by Africans, whenever possible.

FROM OTHER SOURCES

Women's Support Group for 1995 Million Man March Progresses from Selling T-shirts and Holding Fish-frys to Establishing Educational and Cultural Research Center

"In 1995, Newark's Women in Support of the Million Man March(WISOMM) was organized to assist and raise funds statewide for the thousands of men planning to go to Washington, D.C. They sold t-shirts, held fish-frys and spread the word that the me needed to be a part of the march.

"From those humble beginnings, this multi-faith group of women have purchased two buildings and closed October 8 on their latest venture--a $4.5 million Presbyterian church that will become Newark's first African American Educational and Cultural Resource Center. WISOMM is a non-profit organization that dedicated itself to continuing the spirit and momentum of the Million Man March...

"Their first purchase came in 1997 with the WISOMM Mansion, an 18th-century Victorian home. That site became the home of several community organizations, like Muslim, Inc., the Newark Teacher's Association and the Girl Scouts of Greater Essex and Hudson Counties. In 2001, the group purchased their second building and opened their state-of-the-art WISOMM Child Care Center...Their most recent purchase will allow them to expand the child care center...

"'This is all about God', she[Fredericka Bey, executive director of WISOMM] stressed. '...We're creating property that is full of children and beauty. Our goal is to serve the children and families in the city of Newark'.

"The new building is a five-story masonry facility...The first floor house an auditorium...and second floor balconies on three sides. The third floor is a multipurpose area with a raised stage and 14 small classrooms. The fourth floor has a gymnasium with a basketball court, balcony seating, lockers and bathrooms. This floor also includes a four-room apartment...The fifth floor allsows for viewing

games in the gym. It also includes a storage area. The basement as three classrooms, a bowling alley,...two bathrooms and storage areas..."

-from "From Selling Shirts to Owning a $4.5 million Building," page 4, Nov. 2 THE FINAL CALL(Chicago, IL.)

Couple in Harlem Establishes Safe Haven for Escapees from Sierra Leone Civil War

..."For the members of Nah We Yone, a support group for Sierra Leonean emigres, these meetings are a homecoming of sorts, a safe haven, a piece of Sierra Leone transplanted to Harlem. Dr. Yinka Akinsulure Smith and her husband, Dr. Hawthorne 'Hawk' Smith, both psychologists at the Bellevue/New York University Program For Survivors of Torture, have been working with survivors of Sierra Leone's civil war since 1995. 'There were only a few Sierra Leoneans at the beginning', said Hawk, an African-American originally from Philadelphia. 'But as the civil war intensified, we were seeing more and more Sierra Leoneans coming for treatment. They came with nothing. Something needed to be done beyond the clinical work we were doing'. The couple founded Nah We Yone(The name means 'This is Ours' in Krio) in 1997.

"'The big thing we do at Nah We Yone', Yinka said , 'is to give Sierra Leoneans a sense of community. People share the same language, the same food, the same history. They feel a sense of the identity they have lost'...

"...in Sierra Leone, there are amputee camps. In New York, those who go around armless can attract unwelcome attention. People pry, want to know what happened and why.

"'We help refugees formulate how they want to respond', Yinka said...One young man managed to turn his predicament into a university of the street. While waiting for a bus, he would educate the curious about Sierra Leone, the war, the RUF[Revolutionary United Front, a Sierra Leone-based rebel group that attempted to overthrow the government of Joseph Momo, until defeated by a West African peacekeeping contingent, and then, a British-led U.N. peace-

keeping force in 1999], all of it. 'He was able to turn the issue away from himself...'

"Child soldiers posed a special problem. They had been abducted by the RUF...The RUF armed them, turned them into themselves...'I feel you have to separate out the child soldiers completely because one of the things about the war in Sierra Leone was that a large number of people were coerced', Yinka said...But when former child soldiers come to her seeking treatment, she refers them elsewhere. 'Ethically, I could not enter into a treatment relationship with someone that perpetrated crimes against the Sierra Leonean people'...

"'It is very important tha people realize that Sierra Leone is not just a country of victims but a country of survivors', Hawk said. 'One thing the rebel insurgency did not do was pit one ethnic group against another, one religion against another...As a result, the tradition of people being able to relate across those lines remained intact. When there are group meetings here, you will find a Moslem sitting next to a Christian, a Mende sitting next to a Krio. There is a tolerance, an ability to look beyond tribes and social classes that helps Sierra Leoneans reconnect.'"

-from "A Community of Healing: Working with the Trauma Victims of Sierra Leone," pages 32 and 33, Nov./Dec. CLAMOR Magazine(Toledo, OH.)

'African Town' Proposal in Detroit Both Getting Support and Meeting Resistance

"A university professor is calling for a boycott of Arab, Asian and Hispanic businesses if those groups continue to oppose resolutions for the building of an African Town in Detroit.

"Lynn Lewis, a civil rights expert at the University of Detroit-Mercy, said opposition to African Town, an idea generated by young entrepreneurs and elaborated on by Claude Anderson, means opposition to Black dollars. 'If our money is not good enough for our economic development, then it is not good enough for them', Lewis said before Detroit

City Council members...

"Keith Hines, a Detroit resident, said he supports Lewis' call for a boycott. 'We got to be fair', he said. 'We have all kinds of towns here in the city but none about us. If these groups oppose it, we should boycott their businesses'...

"In November 1999, an article in the Detroit News, titled 'Chaldean Dream Takes Shape in Detroit', quoted Asaad Yousif Kalasho, head of the Chaldean Town Association, as saying Chaldeans' goal for such a town was to have, 'a Greektown or Mexican Town in the old Chaldean neighborhood,...Kalasho said there were about 40 businesses along Seven Mile, mostly owned by Chaldeans, and few owned by African-Americans. He estimated that those small businesses generated about $5 million in annual income.

"Another piece, written by Habeeb Salloum in Aljadid Magazine in 1998, underscored how Detroit has become a business hub for different ethnic groups, including Arabs...

"During initial discussion of African Town, Councilwoman JoAnn Watson...said she fought for funding for other ethnic groups at council table. 'I fought [for] and supported funding for La Raza when it slipped in the mayor's budget', Watson said, referring to the Hispanic population. Watson said no matter the opposition, it couldn't denigrate the fact that 'Africa is the birthplace of humanity', and that African Town would be a fitting tribute to the Motherland...

"Like many, she said African Town in an 85-percent African-American city was a fitting tribute to a people whose ancestors labored on plantations for centuries without pay.

"'We are all in it together to improve Detroit', said Maria Elena Rodriguez, head of the Mexican Town Community Development Corporation. Rodriguez said the language of the resolutions, which calls for $38 million to be set aside for a Black business district, 'should be fine-tuned'.

"Jumana Judeh, vice president of the Amerfican Arab Chamber of Commerce, who described the resolution as 'extremely

negative', would not return three calls placed to her office..."

-from "Detroiters Pondering Boycott of Businesses Over African Town," page 2A, Nov. 4-10 JACKSON ADVOCATE (Jackson, MS.)

African American/Latino Alliance Convenes First "Black/ Brown Freedom School"

"The African American/Latino Alliance(AALA) convened its first Black/Brown Freedom School on August 7 and 8, 2004 in Goldsboro, North Carolina. North Carolina is one of several states that has experienced a major change in its demographies as a result of the high rate of immigration of workers from Latin America--particularly Mexico--into the U.S. South. Since 1990, North Carolina's Latino immigrant population. Other states primarily impacted include Georgia, Virginia, Arkansas, and Tennessee.

"Rural communities in the US South that once had little to no experience with large scale immigration from Latin America are now facing the significant impact due primarily to aggressive recruitment strategies in low wage, labor intensive industries such as meat packing, poultry, construction, and the more traditional farm labor...

"...the Black/Brown Freedom School...examined issues of globalization, African-American history, Latino history, conditions in Mexico that drive poor workers to seek 'economic asylum' in the U.S., and a language exchange to teach both Latino and Black workers to speak and understand each others culture and languages, English and Spanish.

"About 60 rank & file workers and activists from both the African American and Latino communities attended the School...

"The Transnationals Information Exchange(TIE) was a co-sponsor of the School and brought Executive Director Marta Ojeda of the Coalition for Justice in the Maquiiladoras and Spanish instructors from CETLALIC in Cuernavaca, Mexico. CETLALIC is a language school based in the tradition of the teachings of Paulo Freire and founded to teach Spanish

as a second language.

"The African American/Latino Alliance...was founded in February of 2000 as a direct effort to address the problems created in both communities by the immigration issues...This October, the AALA will sponsor its first exchange trip to Mexico, taking both rank and file African American and Latino workers to see first hand the impact immigration has had inside Mexico."

-from "Black/Brown Freedom School Confirms Needed Process of Unity in Black and Latino Communities," page 6, Sept. /Oct. JUSTICE SPEAKS(Raleigh, N.C.)

Congressional Black Caucus Petitioned to Investigate Illegal F.B.I. Actions and Ongoing Victimization of Wrongly Accused

"The Partnership for Social Justice launched a petition drive urging the Congressional Black Caucus to investigate illegal FBI actions that have kept dozens of men and women languishing in prison, long after the government program that imprisoned them has been discredited.

"The petition asks Democratic Congressman John Conyers Jr. of Michigan, and Chair of the House Judiciary Committee, to conduct hearings that may result in the freeing of those wrongly convicted who were targets of J. Edgar Hoover's COINTELPRO[Counter-intelligence Program]. Congress has already established that COINTELPRO violated the constitutional rights of thousands of people.

"According to the FBI, COINTELPRO's purpose was to 'expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize the activities of the Black nationalists'. A specific purpose was to prevent the rise of a Black 'Messiah', a charismatic leader who might unify and electrify Black people...

"Today, over 150 political prisoners are still being held in custody in the U.S. At least 50 of them are African American activists..."

-from "Campaign Petitions for Justice for COINTELPRO

Victims," pages 3 and 9, Oct. THE COMMEMORATOR(Oakland, CA.)

Trinidad & Tobago's Head of State Calls for Political Union of Islands in Southern Caribbean

"Trinidad and Tobago's Prime Minister Patrick Manning has called for a political union of the islands in the southern Caribbean. He made the appeal in an address opening a two-day special summit of regional leaders here...

"Mr. Manning also reaffirmed his government's commitment to regional integration, noting Trinidad and Tobago has introduced and shouldered many initiatives to help Caribbean Community(CARICOM) states respond to difficult challenges. He said a $6 million relief package has been set up to help si states, including Cuba, which suffered extensive damage in September from Hurricane Ivan...

"Mr. Manning also disclosed plans to lay submarine cables to supply electricity and natural gas to Tobago, Grenada, St. Vincent, Barbados and Guadeloupe. He said feasibility studies indicated the project will cost some $247 million."

-from "PM Suggests Political Union in Caribbean," page 9, Nov. 23 THE FINAL CALL(Chicago, IL.)

What Role is Former Colonial Power, France Playing in Ivory Coast?

"France is coming under fire for its heavy-handed action in destroying virtually the entire air force of its former colony Cote d'Ivoire, in retaliation for the recent killings of nine French soldiers and a U.S. aid worker.

"'We deeply regret the unfortunate incident', Ambassador Philippe Djangone-Bi of Cote d'Ivoire told reporters Nov. 9. 'But France was wrong in its unilateral reprisal', he added. He said his government wants the Security Council to make a pronouncement about 'our right as a sovereign nation'...

"As part of a combined French-UN peacekeeping force, Paris has more than 4,500 troops in Cote d'Ivoire, where a civil war has partitioned the territory into a government-held south and a rebel-held north.

"The UN operation in Cote d'Ivoire(UNOCI), created by the Security Council in April 2004, has a military strength of over 6,000 peacekeepers. But in an unusual arrangement, French troops have the right to act alone and do not come under the military authority of UNOCI. The two forces are mandated to monitor a May 2003 ceasefire and peace agreement signed by the rebel forces and the government of President Laurent Gbagbo.

"Kwame Akonor, executive director of the New York-based African Development Institute, said French concern over developments in its former colony is not simply politically motivated: Cote d'Ivoire has long been the key investment platform for French companies in West Africa. France, he said, is Cote d'Ivoire's biggest single trading partner, defense supplier and bilateral aid donor. Paris also has military bases in the African country...

"'There should be either a United Nations force or an African Union(AU) force. The French clearly have an interest in retaining their role as the hegemonic power over their former colonies', he[Bill Fletcher Jr., executive director of Washington-based TransAfrica Forum] told IPS.

"South African President Thabo Mbeki has been mandated by the AU and the Economice Community of West African States to visit the Ivorian capital of Abidjan and mediate to two-year-old civil war..."

-from "Violent French Reaction in Cote d'Ivoire Criticized," pages 13 and 35, Nov. 23 THE FINAL CALL

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As African men, we commit ourselves to respecting ourselves and each other; to respecting African women; and to respecting our children and youth, and giving them proper guidance.

KUUMBA

JUST MAYBE...

Just maybe if you believe
it so...
If you no longer turned your
collar up...
Or committed suicide over
name brands not your
own...
Then maybe so...
you can be a part of this.
Just so you like the trend
that has already been set-
As far back as Waset-
When Timbuktu was not in
History books
but in those parts of your mind
where you've been taught not to look...
Just maybe if you believe
it so...
If you no longer turned your
collar up...
Burning brilliant brain cells-
just trying to chill
To fill the day not to be you
Just maybe if you believe
it so...
If you no longer turned your
collar up...
And being Afrikan meant
Something to be proud of.
Just so you like the trend
already set
I got you listening now
But it aint over yet
Just maybe...

--Kafele

(This brother, who just recently returned from the Tecumseh joint, is our newly-appointed Olotu Eko.)

BOOKS

SHOULD AMERICA PAY?: SLAVERY AND THE RAGING DEBATE ON REPARATIONS

[The following passages are excerpted from the Oct. 2004 edition of KUUMBA Report, a newsletter published in Baltimore, MD. SHOULD AMERICA PAY?: SLAVERY AND THE RAGING DEBATE ON REPARATIONS, edited by Raymond A. Winbush, was published in 2003.]

In this book, Winbush] has compiled a variety of essays from a wide spectrum of representatives of the Afrikan-American intellectual world, as well as several Americans of European descent, each of whom makes a unique contribution to the issue of reparations using both historical analysis and commentary...

Indeed, the evidence in these essays, and other historical documents, is that the United States has fought tooth-and-nail to deny Afrikan people living in America their just birthright, from the abolition of slavery to the present day, and that there was an Afrikan carrying the struggle forward every step of the way. Strong contributions to our understanding of this important history are provided by Molefi Kete Asante, Congressman John Conyers Jr., Jo Ann Nichols Watson, Deadrea C. Farmer-Paellman and the editor, Dr. Winbush...

Comparisons are, of course, made to other major reparations cases, including the successful campaigns of Jewish Holocaust descendants against Germany and Austria and of Japanese-Americans against the United States for their internments in concentration camps during World war II; the marginally successful efforts by some of the First Nations(American Indians) to obtain compensation for the centuries of broken treaties, stolen lands, and genocide; and the so-far unsuccessful attempts by indigenous Hawai'-ians to regain sovereignty over their homeland, as explained by Haunani-Kay Trask. Several chapters look at each of these issues as a way of showing precedents that have been

established but not yet recognized for Afrikan people.

Other legal precedents and some of the "burning questions surrounding the determinations of eligibility for and the awarding of reparations are covered in essays by Jon M Van Dyke, Robert Westley, and Omari L. Winbush, a lawyer and Dr. Winbush's son. A discussion between four of the US's most successful class-action lawyers from the 2001 issue of Harper's Magazine offers a lively analysis of reparations in legal terms...

Contemporary issues of organizing around the reparations issue are explained by several of the contributors, including Conrad Worrill of the National Black United Front, attorney Adjoa Aiyetoro of N'COBRA, and Roger Wareham, who presents an enlightening discussion of the preparations for the 2001 United Nattions World Conference Against Racism...Overall, this book presents a rich variety of viewpoints on reparations that should make it a worthy companion volume to Randall Robinson's 2000 work, THE DEBT: WHAT AMERICA OWES TO BLACKS.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization state prison chapter will be holding its annual Kwanzaa program on Dec. 28th. from 5-8 p.m. at the state prison in Lincoln, NE. The prison is located at 14th. and Pioneers Blvd. For additional information, call 479-3379.

With the slogan "Don't Fall Off," Ledge is a free, Black AIDS Institute-sponsored publication [which] seeks to create conversation and change by offering statistics, prevention tips and other information. Students interested in contributing to Ledge or obtaining additional information on HIV/AIDS and its effects on the Black community can log onto www.ledgemagazine.com.

BACK IN TIME

n ancient West Africa, the ancestral home of many Africans n the diaspora, the King was the "servant and shepherd f the people." Among the Mossi, the Emperor, or Moro Naba, nherited the right to power from the family of the previous oro Naba. However, the King did not simply assume power hrough hereditary right. The King was selected from a umber of royal candidates, by the people's representatives. hen the King assumed office, he was invested with authority y the people's representatives. To assure that the eople's views were respected, the King's Council of Minisers all came from the common people...

'hancellor Williams, in his book, The Destruction of Black 'ivilization, says, "It was therefore in societies without 'hiefs or Kings where African democracy was born..." These 'hief-less societies were governed by age grades, where eople were grouped together according to age, and the lders' deliberations were held in the presence of the ommunity. In these age grade societies the rights of he community came before the rights of the individual. lfrican democracy was collective, communal, and rooted n the will of the people.

n rural southern Black communities, during the Reconstruction and Post-Reconstruction period, rural Blacks drew n rich African leadership carry overs. These African eadership carry overs were blended into a rural Black olk cultural tradition where community decisions were ollectively...after a wide ranging discussion of different deas. In the tradition of African democracy, the community ecision was a consensus decision.

"Rural southern Blacks were also clear about their definiion of leadership. For these Blacks, leaders were 'mouthieces' of the group, much as they were in Africa. If ome spokesperson[s] thought that they exercised power ndependent of the community, they soon discovered that hey ceased to be leaders when they voiced views contrary o the will of the Black community.

Source: THE ART OF LEADERSHIP(Vol. I) by Oba T'Shaka

HARAMBEE AFRIKAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION CREED

Together we seek to know that which is us, to expand our collective consciousness of who we are and whence we come. We exalt in the fact that Africans are beautiful in our own right, rather than at the expense of any other group of people. And in the true spirit of the Swahili word, "harambee," we promote the idea that cultural awareness is germane to human growth.

NGUZO SABA

Umoja - Unity
Kujichagulia - Self-determination
Ujima - Collective Work and Responsibility
Ujamaa - Cooperative Economics
Nia - Purpose
Kuumba - Creativity
Imani - Faith

HARAMBEE AFRIKAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Alaga(Chairman) - Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa

Eso/Alakoso Asha(Sgt.-at-Arms/Chairman of Cultural Affairs Committee) - Les Wagner

Olotu Eko(Education Chairman) - Yusef Jaha Kafele

Eleto(Administrative Chairman) - "Red" Kirtley

Akapo(Treasurer) - position unfilled

Akowe(Secretary) - Mosi Bankole

Akewi(Librarian) - position unfilled

HARAMBEE FLAME EDITOR

Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa